

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A suturing device comprising:
a housing, the housing having a proximal end, a distal end, a hollow body, an opening disposed toward the distal end and into the housing, and a blade guard partially extending over the opening from a proximal end toward a distal end of the opening and terminating proximal the distal end of the opening;
a needle actuation handle disposed at the proximal end of the housing;
a movable handle;
a shaft at least partially disposed within a portion of the housing and extending distally from the distal end of the housing;
a needle movable within a needle lumen associated with the shaft and that extends toward a proximal end of the housing, the needle being attached to a length of suture, the needle having a tapered tip, the tapered tip being initially oriented toward the distal end of the housing; and
a stationary suture cutting blade positioned on the housing and ~~extending within~~ protruding through the opening and the hollow body, the stationary suture cutting blade being disposed beneath the blade guard, the stationary suture cutting blade extending distally toward the distal end of the housing and having a cutting edge facing toward the distal end of the housing, the suture cutting blade being configured to sever the suture drawn across the stationary suture cutting blade.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein the moveable handle and the blade are positioned near the distal end of the housing.
4. (Canceled).
5. (Original) The suturing device of claim 3, wherein the needle and the suture are withdrawn from the proximal end of the housing.

6. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein the moveable handle and the blade are positioned near the proximal end of the housing.

7. (Canceled).

8. (Canceled).

9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein the movable handle is configured to deploy a foot transverse to the shaft.

11. (Original) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein the needle has a distal end and the suture is attached to the distal end of the needle.

12. (Currently Amended) A suturing device comprising:

a housing, the housing having a proximal end, a distal end, and a hollow body having an opening disposed toward the distal end and into the housing, and a blade guard partially extending over the opening from a proximal end toward a distal end of the opening and terminating proximal the distal end of the opening;

an elongate stationary suture cutting blade positioned on the housing and ~~extending within protruding through~~ the opening and the hollow body, the stationary suture cutting blade being disposed beneath and recessed below the blade guard, the stationary suture cutting blade extending distally toward the distal end of the housing and having a cutting edge facing toward the distal end of the housing;

an elongate shaft at least partially disposed within the housing and extending distally from the distal end of the housing, the elongate shaft having a distal end region;

a removable needle actuation handle disposed at the proximal end of the housing and removably from within the proximal opening of the housing;

a needle extending from the needle actuation handle, through the housing and further through a needle lumen associated with the shaft that extends toward the proximal end of the housing, the needle having a tapered tip, the tapered tip being initially oriented toward the distal end of the housing; and

a suture carried by the device, wherein a portion of the suture is positioned near the distal end region of the shaft such that the needle pulls the suture proximally to position the suture through tissue, the needle actuation handle being removable from within the proximal opening of the housing to position the suture adjacent the suture cutting blade to separate the needle from the suture.

13. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the blade is positioned near the distal end of the inner surface of the opening of the housing.

14. (Original) The suturing device of claim 13, wherein the needle pulls the suture through the proximal end of the housing.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Original) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the needle and the suture are withdrawn from the proximal end of the housing.

17. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the blade is positioned near the proximal end of the inner surface of the opening of the housing.

18. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein the blade is mounted on an end of the finger grip.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) A suturing device comprising:

a housing, the housing defining an interior space and having a proximal end, a distal end, an opening disposed toward the distal end and into the housing, and a blade guard partially extending over the opening from a proximal end toward a distal end of the opening and terminating proximal the distal end of the opening, the housing includes a finger grip;

a needle actuation handle disposed at the proximal end of the housing;

a shaft at least partially disposed within a portion of the housing and extending distally from the distal end of the housing;

a needle movable within a needle lumen associated with the shaft and that extends toward a proximal end of the housing, the needle being attached to a length of suture, the needle having a tapered tip, the tapered tip being initially oriented toward the distal end of the housing; and

a stationary suture cutting blade positioned on the housing and ~~extending within~~ protruding through the opening and the interior space, the stationary suture cutting blade being recessed within and beneath the blade guard, the stationary suture cutting blade having a V-shaped cutting edge having one cutting edge orientated relative to another cutting edge in a V-shaped orientation, the cutting edges being configured to sever the suture drawn across the stationary suture cutting blade.

21. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein the finger grip and the blade are positioned near the proximal end of the housing.

22. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 21, wherein the needle and the suture are withdrawn from the proximal end of the housing.

23. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein the needle has a distal end and the suture is attached to the distal end of the needle.

24. (New) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the removable needle actuation handle is configured to deploy a foot transverse to the shaft.

25. (New) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein the needle actuation handle is configured to deploy a foot transverse to the shaft.